

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☐
no ☐

Property Name: Altamont Seventeen Mile Grade and Altamont Interlocking Tower Inventory Number: ~~G-IV-B-175~~ and G-IV-B-118
Address: Piedmont, WVA, to Altamont, MD.
Accessed by Altamont Tower Road City: Altamont Zip Code: N/A
County: Garrett USGS Topographic Map: Deer Park, Kitzmuller, Barton, Westernport, and others
Owner: CSX Transportation Is the property being evaluated a district? ☐ yes
Tax Parcel Number: N/A Tax Map Number: N/A Tax Account ID Number: N/A
Project: Assess Visual Effects of Allegheny Heights Windpower Facility Agency: _____
Site visit by MHT Staff: ☒ no ☐ yes Name: _____ Date: _____
Is the property located within a historic district? ☐ yes ☒ no

If the property is within a district

District Inventory Number: _____

NR-listed district ☐ yes Eligible district ☐ yes District Name: _____

Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ☐ yes ☐ no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ☐

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)

Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ☒ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☒ None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in:

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The Altamont Seventeen Mile Grade (MIHP # G-IV-B-175) and the Altamont Interlocking Tower (MIHP # G-IV-B-118) are two components associated with the same resource. The Altamont Seventeen Mile Grade is a 17-mile section of railroad track that was constructed between Piedmont, WVA, and Altamont, MD. The railroad was part of the extension of the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad main line west of Cumberland, MD, to Wheeling, WVA. The grade is mapped correctly in the MHT GIS.

The route was surveyed beginning in 1847. After leaving Cumberland, the railroad followed the Potomac River to Westernport, Maryland. The road crossed into Garrett County west of Piedmont, WVA, and began a long ascent up Backbone Mountain by following the Savage River valley that passes between the Big Savage Mountain and Backbone Mountain. The railroad then turned southeast along the west side of Backbone Mountain following Crabtree Creek, reaching the summit of the Allegheny Mountains at Altamont at an altitude of 2,628 feet. This is the highest point of the railroad in Western Maryland. The length of the railroad track is seventeen miles with an ascent of 116 feet per mile, a ruling grade of 2.2 per cent. Though the grade was steeper than originally surveyed,

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☒ Eligibility not recommended ☐

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

Comments: _____

Andrew Lewis
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

4/7/05
Date

John E. Kuntz
Reviewer, NR Program

4/7/05
Date

200500684

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Continuation Sheet No. 1

G-IV-B-118

the technology of the locomotives was able to handle the ascent. The ascent of 116 feet per mile was adopted as the not-to-exceed standard for the transcontinental railroads constructed later over the Rocky Mountains. The railroad over Backbone Mountain was constructed during 1850-1851. Five thousand men and twelve hundred horses were employed to grade the B&O line. The earth was drilled by hand or blasted by explosive powder. Horse-drawn carts were used to remove the stone and soil. A single track was originally constructed over the line. The first passenger train completed the ascent over Backbone Mountain in July 1851 (Dilts 1993:333, 342, 366; Schlosnagle 1978:198-203).

In 1872, a second track was laid along the Altamont 17-mile grade and double tracking was continued to Oakland in 1873 (Weeks 1949:34). The Altamont Interlocking Tower (MIHP # G-IV-B-118) was constructed ca. 1875 to house the mechanisms that controlled the switches for the multiple tracking. The two-story, two-bay by two-bay, wood-frame building is clad with aluminum siding. The hipped roof is sheathed with composition roll. The windows and primary access are located on the second story, which overlooks the railroad tracks. The primary doorway occupies the east elevation and is accessed by an exterior metal stairway. The windows are single and paired one-over-one-light, double-hung sash units. A secondary doorway into the first story is located on the west elevation. The tower was removed from service in the 1990s.

The construction of the railroad through this section of Garrett County spurred the subsequent settlement and development of the area. The railroad supported local lumbering and coal mining industries. New towns were established along the railroad line, including Altamont, Swanton, Deer Park, Loch Lynn, and Oakland.

The Altamont Seventeen-Mile Grade was an engineering feat of its day, along with several structures, primarily bridges, and grades that were constructed for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. This section of the railroad is significant for its qualities of engineering applying National Register Criteria C. Although this section of tracking has been continually upgraded throughout its history, the grading and approximate location of the line remain the same as constructed in 1850-1851. The Altamont Interlocking Tower was a support structure constructed ca. 1875 to house the switches to control the tracking at the western end of the grade and contributes information illustrating the evolution of the railroad track along the grade.

References

Dilts, James D.

1993 *The Great Road*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Maryland Historical Trust

1981 MIHP Forms G-IV-B-175 and G-IV-B-118. On file at the MHT Library, Crownsville, MD.

Schlosnagle, Stephen

1978 *Garrett County: A History of Maryland's Tableland*. Reprinted 1997. McClain Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia.

Weeks, Thekla Fundenberg

1949 *Oakland, Garrett County*. Published by the Oakland Centennial Commission, Inc. Sincell Printing Company, Oakland, MD.

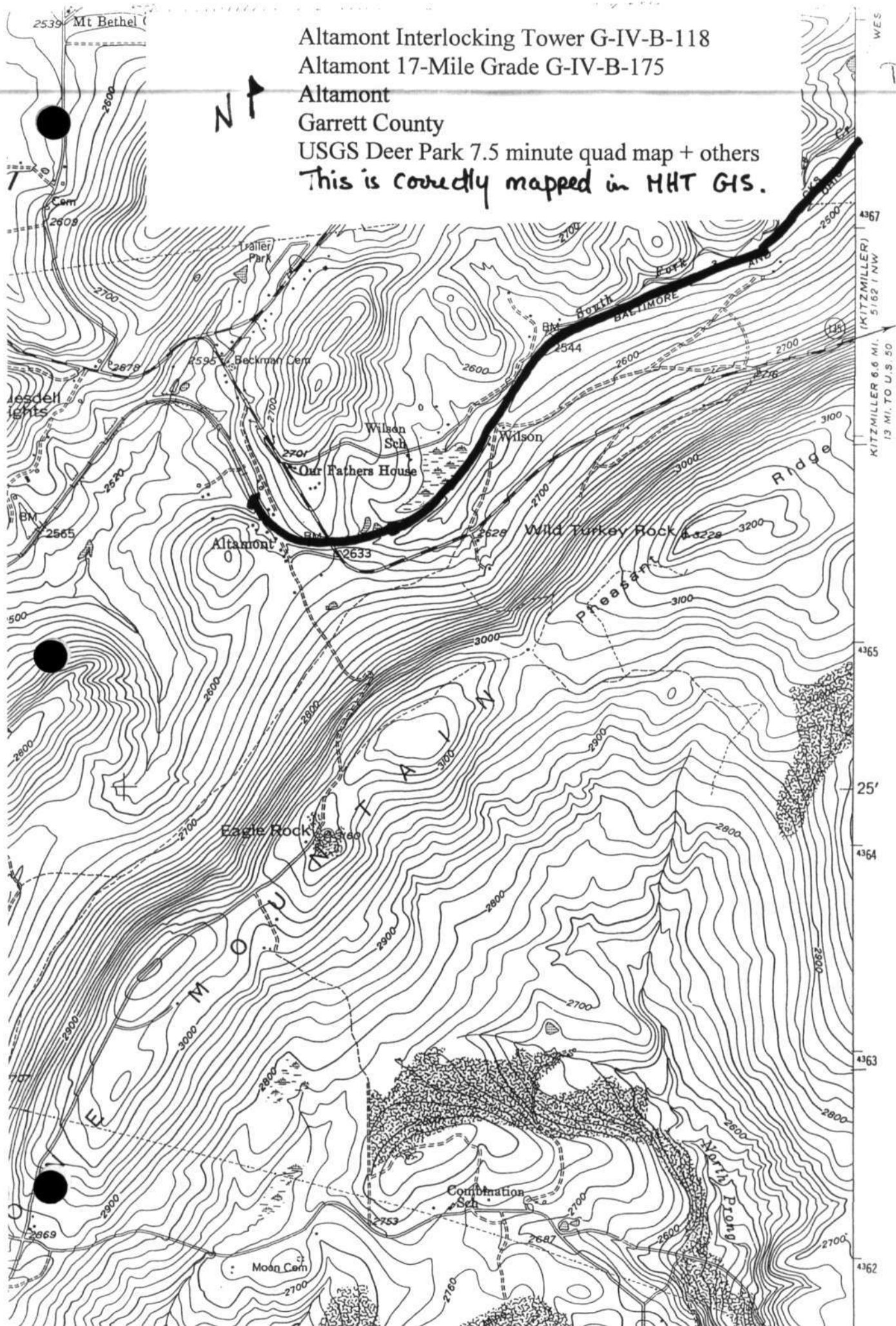
Katherine Grandine, M.A., R.
Christopher Goodwin &
Associates, Inc.

Prepared by:

Date Prepared: January 2005

Altamont Interlocking Tower G-IV-B-118
Altamont 17-Mile Grade G-IV-B-175
Altamont
Garrett County
USGS Deer Park 7.5 minute quad map + others
This is correctly mapped in MHT GIS.

*Deer Park
1918;
1981*





HHP # G-IV-B-18

ATAMONT INTERLOCKING TOWER
GARRETT COUNTY, MARYLAND

RCGA

JANUARY 2005

MD STATE

ATAMONT INTERLOCKING TOWER - VIEW W

1051

G-IV-B-118

Altamont Interlocking Tower

~~Public~~ *Private*

Altamont

The Altamont Interlocking Tower is a three-story, hipped-roofed, rectangular structure, measuring two bays by two bays. The rests on a poured concrete foundation and is covered with grey vinyl siding over German siding.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Altamont Interlocking Tower

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Off Altamont Tower Rd., S. side, on W. side of B&O RR.

CITY, TOWN

Altamont

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Garrett County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☒ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

C&O Right of Way (William A. Finch)

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Garrett County Courthouse

Liber #: 282

Folio #: 196

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Alder Streets

CITY, TOWN

Oakland

STATE

Maryland 21550

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**☐ EXCELLENT☒ GOOD☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED DATE _____**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Altamont Interlocking Tower is located off Altamont Tower Road, on the west side of the B&O Railroad. The tower stands just to one side of the tracks. On the east side of the tracks is a small outbuilding.

The Tower is a three-story, hipped-roofed, rectangular structure, measuring two bays by two bays. An exterior metal staircase runs up the southeast elevation to a third floor entrance. Another door is set into the first floor on the northwest elevation. Two sets of double windows overlook the tracks on the third floor of the northeast elevation.

The tower rests on a poured concrete foundation and is covered with grey vinyl siding over German siding. The windows are modern 1/1 sash. The roof is covered with asphalt shingle. The tower has an exterior brick stove chimney on the southwest elevation. The interior arrangement of the tower is unknown.

Northeast across the tracks is a one-story, hipped-roofed storage building. Covered in grey German siding, the building has a wide entrance on the southwest elevation and an asphalt shingle roof. The outbuilding, like the tower, was once painted yellow.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

G-IV-B-118

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT B&O RR

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Altamont Interlocking Tower was built to house the mechanisms which control the interlocking of the several sets of tracks which run past it to Deer Park and thence to Oakland. The mechanism shifts trains from one set of tracks to another. This interlocking, like the town of Altamont, was built at the summit of the Altamont 17-mile Grade, which was completed in the 1850's (see G-IV-B-175). After completion of the railroad through to West Virginia, this area of Western Maryland became a highly desirable vacation spot and remained so until the advent of the inexpensive motorcar in the 1920's.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann Burns, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust/Bureau of Mines

DATE

September 1981

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

(301) 269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

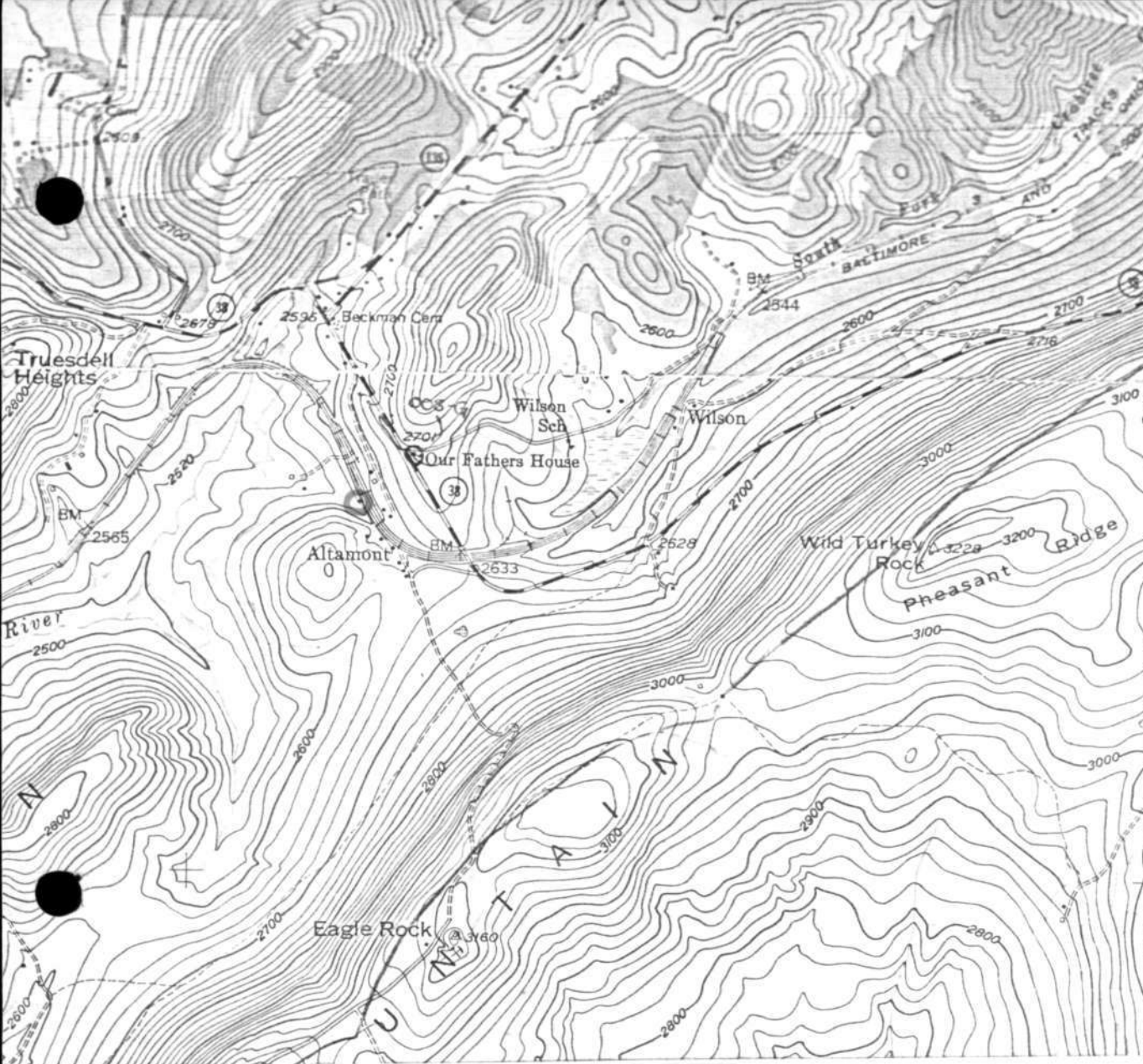
STATE

Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



4357
KITZMILLER 6.6 MI.
13 MI. TO U.S. 50
4365
25'
4364

Deer Park
Upper Potomac
Coal Basin
(Coal basin
Approximate)

Deer Park, MD
USGS 7.5 minute series
Scale - 1:24,000
1948; photorevised 1974

Site #: G-IV-B-118
Altamont Interlocking Tower
off Altamont Tower Rd., on the west
side of the B&O RR.
Altamont



G-IV-B-118

Altamont Interlocking Tower

Garrett Co., MD

Ann Burns 9/10/81

SE & NE elevs.